Teaching with Primary Sources Across Tennessee

NEWSLETTER: JUNE 2011

WELCOME!

Teaching with Primary Sources across Tennessee, administered by the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University, engages learners of all ages in using primary sources to explore major issues and questions in many different disciplines.

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NEWS

- Teaching with Primary Sources Across Tennessee has a new page on Facebook! Be sure to “Like” our page to receive the latest workshop and resource announcements as well as suggested links and sources on the Library of Congress Web site.

- The TPS-TN Web site has created a new page to showcase the Webcast programs we have participated in since 2008. Each entry contains a link to that Webcast’s page at the MTSU Instructional Technology Support Center’s Web site. Sign in to receive your PD credit.

- Interested in History Day? Come to one of the joint TN History Day—Teaching with Primary Sources workshops. We have one-day workshops for educators just starting out, and two-day workshops for History Day-experienced teachers.

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

- June 7 & 8—(Memphis) "Utilizing Primary Sources" Workshop, National Civil Rights Museum, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Open to all. To register, email Kira Duke.

- June 10—(Knoxville) "Introduction to Teaching with Primary Sources Across Tennessee" Workshop, East Tennessee History Center, Time TBD. Open to educators in Anderson, Union, and Sevier counties.

- June 14 & 15—(Hendersonville) "Utilizing the Library of Congress in Your Classroom" & "Beyond the Basics: Teaching with Primary Sources Across Tennessee and the Library of Congress" Sessions at the Sumner County Technology Conference, Merol Hyde Magnet School. Open to Sumner County Schools Teachers. Times TBD.

"AWESOME" SOURCE OF THE MONTH:

The national parks preserve wild life [between 1936 and 1939]

THEME: NATIONAL PARKS

"O beautiful for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain, for purple mountains’ majesty…” are familiar words to most Americans. Where better to appreciate the beauties the song is celebrating than our national parks? They have been called “America’s Best Idea,” and for good reason. The U.S. National Parks not only preserve wildlife (see poster at left), but preserve the natural beauty, wide-open spaces, and diverse heritage that are integral to American identity.

Tennessee is home to the most visited of these parks: the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (which we share with North Carolina). Though the establishment of this and other national parks has caused much debate over public lands vs. private lands, federal government vs. local government, and preservation vs. progress, most Americans will appreciate the contribution of our parks to economic development, scientific progress, and the pure pleasure of beautiful natural areas.

Look at the poster at left. What is pictured most prominently? What kind of visual impact does the poster make? Why does this message need to be advertised?

Teaching with Primary Sources is a program of the Library of Congress, and is administered in Tennessee by the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University.
**Lesson Idea – Safety in the National Parks**

Whether for a vacation, a hike, camping, sightseeing, or to learn something new, over 281 million people visit the 394 areas maintained by the National Park System each year. With so many visitors, safety is a major concern for park employees.

Break students up into four different groups, and assign each group one of the following parks: 1) Mammoth Cave, 2) Sequoia, 3) Everglades, 4) Death Valley. Have students examine the photographs and then further familiarize themselves with the park’s climate, terrain, and wildlife by looking up each park on the National Park Service Web site. Then, have students create a First Aid kit specifically designed for their assigned park, using items already found within their homes, or by finding images of products online or in magazines. Compare and contrast the First-Aid kits for the different parks. What other materials and safety equipment should visitors to these parks bring (e.g., insect repellent, water, food, flashlight)? And don’t forget to bring a map!

As an additional activity, print out images of 1) Rattlesnake and 2) Poison Hemlock. Have students role play. What would you do if someone got bitten by a rattlesnake or came into contact with Poison Hemlock? What would you do if you saw a bear doing this?

This lesson idea can be adapted to meet state curriculum standards for 9th-12th grade Lifetime Wellness (Standard 5: Safety and First Aid).

**Lesson Idea – National Parks Photography**

Have you ever looked at and admired photographs taken in national parks that you’ve never visited? Have you ever been to a national park and not taken a photograph? Photographs, because of their ability to capture and portray scenic beauty, are common advertisements for future visitors, as well as souvenirs for present and past park visitors. However, many will agree that a photograph can never adequately capture the visual and sensory experience of actually being there.

For the following 6 photographs, you may choose to focus on one photograph in particular, or you may print and pass out one each to groups of students: 1) Mount Foraker, Denali National Park, Alaska, 2) Castle Geyser, Yellowstone National Park, 3) Stark Peak and water falls, Glacier National Park, Montana, 4) Yosemite Valley from Artists’ Point, Calif., 5) Echo Cliffs, Grand River Canyon, Colo., 6) Great Smoky Mountains National Park. For more images, or to select your own, try searching American Memory and Prints & Photographs for “national parks,” or for names of specific parks.

Have students describe, on paper, what they see in the photograph and how it makes them feel. Be sure to use similes and metaphors to convey the harder-to-describe aspects of the scenery. Next, have group or class discussions on the reasons behind the photographs. How does this photograph entice potential visitors to come to the park? What other reasons might this photograph have been taken? Do you think the photograph was taken by a tourist? Now compare and contrast all 6 images among your students. What are some of the natural differences between the parks? Can you tell in what parts of the country certain parks are located, based solely on observation of the photos?

This lesson idea can be adapted to meet state curriculum standards for 7th-8th grade English/Language Arts (Standards 3: Writing & 7: Media).
Lesson Idea—Tennessee’s Own National Park

The land that makes up today’s Great Smoky Mountains National Park was home to many different communities from the time of prehistoric Indians to the Cherokee to early European settlers. The beautiful mountainous land along the Tennessee and North Carolina border supported families and communities up to the opening of the national park in 1934. Once the park opened, these individuals lost their homes and their communities. The designation of this land as a national park saved the area from the depletion of its trees by the logging industry and preserved the land and its many natural resources for future generations to enjoy.

In this activity, students will be divided into those in support of the creation of the national park and those opposed. Students will write a persuasive essay outlining their arguments. Students will need to conduct independent research to construct their arguments and utilize at least three primary sources for 5th grade and five primary sources for high school.

Students should explore the American Environmental Photographs, Mapping the National Parks, American English Dialect Recordings, and Built in America collections for primary sources. Students can also explore the PBS Web site, The National Parks: America’s Best Idea, for the history of the region and the formation of the park.

After students have written their essays, have a class debate with students sharing their primary sources and the arguments they have constructed.

This lesson idea can be adapted to meet state curriculum standards for 5th grade Social Studies (Standard 3: Geography and Standard 4: Government), high school Environmental Science (Standard 4: Land and Water Resources), and high school World Geography (Standard 4: Governance and Civics).

Featured Feature—Mapping the National Parks

The Library of Congress Web site contains a wide variety of sources related to the national parks. Mapping the National Parks is a great place to start your exploration. Housed in American Memory, this collection of approximately 200 maps documents the history, geological features, and culture of four areas that would eventually become national parks. The four parks featured in this collection are Acadia, Grand Canyon, Great Smoky Mountains, and Yellowstone. For each of the parks, you will find special presentations that provide background on the area’s history and the park’s founding.

Acadia, located on the coast of Maine, was the first national park founded east of the Mississippi River. The Grand Canyon, one of the most famous national landmarks, was designated a national park in 1919. Both Acadia and the Grand Canyon were given the designation in the same year. Great Smoky Mountains National Park protects some of the world’s oldest mountains and is the most visited of all national parks. Yellowstone was our nation’s first national park.

From the collection’s home page, you will find a wide variety of additional resources including background on the collection and related resources. Be sure to check out Collection Connections for suggestions on how you can incorporate these wonderful maps into your classroom. You can search the collection by geographic location as well as subject, title, and creator. You will also find several links with helpful information on using and viewing maps.
What is Tundra?

Alaskan tundra, Denali National Park, Alaska [2008]

Tundra is a kind of environment found in mountainous areas in the far Northern Hemisphere. The soil (called permafrost) is too cold to allow the growth of trees. Look at the green areas in the above photograph. Do these look like any mountains you would find in Tennessee? How does the lack of trees make them look? What kind of animals and plants would you expect to find in a tundra? (Answer: click here.)

How Green Was My Valley

The Hetch Hetchy scheme; why it should not be rushed through the extra session; an open letter to the American people. [New York, 1913]. [detail, 4 pages]

Read the article above about the Hetch Hetchy Valley controversy in the Yosemite National Park. Then, read about the Cherokee towns, Chota and Tanasi, here (pg. 122-125). Compare and contrast the flooding of the Hetch Hetchy Valley to the flooding of these Tennessee Cherokee towns.

Park Ranger in Snowdrift

Park Ranger - Boulder foothills 1930's [between 1935 and 1950?]

Did you know that there are approximately 22,000 employees and 221,000 volunteers at National Parks? What are some of the many jobs and responsibilities of a Park Ranger? Do Park Rangers ride on horseback today, dressed like the man in this photograph?

Mesa Verde Cliff Dwellers

Cliff Palace, Mesa Verde [c. 1898]

Many National Park sites, like Mesa Verde, were once home to Native Americans. These Parks were established not just for their natural beauty, but for their historical and cultural significance. In fact, the National Park Service logo contains an arrowhead meant to represent the “historical and archeological values” of many of the Parks.